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With each strike, fears grow that Israel, the U.S. and Iran's allies are inching closer to all-out war

By JOSEPH KRAUSS
Associated Press

In the last week alone, an Israeli airstrike has killed a Hezbollah commander in Lebanon, Hezbollah struck a sensitive Israeli base with rockets and Israel killed a senior Hamas militant with an airstrike in Beirut. Each strike and counter-strike increases the risk of the catastrophic war in Gaza spilling across the region.



Civil defense workers search for survivors inside an apartment following a massive explosion in the southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon, Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2024.

Continued on Page 2

Associated Press

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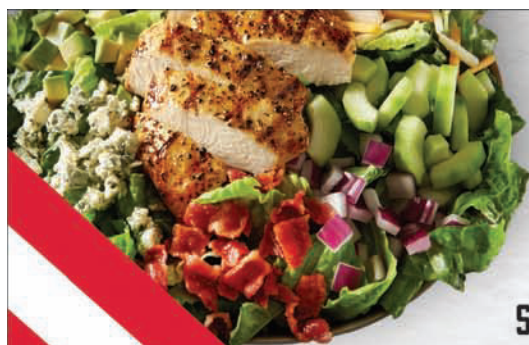
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With each strike, fears grow that Israel, the U.S. and Iran's allies are inching closer to all-out war

Continued from Front

In the decades-old stand-off pitting the U.S. and Israel against Iran and allied militant groups, there are fears that any party could trigger a wider war if only to avoid appearing weak. A U.S. air-strike killed an Iran-backed militia leader in Baghdad last week, and the U.S. Navy recently traded fire with Iran-aligned Houthi rebels in the Red Sea.

The divisions within each camp add another layer of volatility. Hamas might have hoped its Oct. 7 rampage across southern Israel that triggered the war in Gaza would drag its allies into a wider conflict. Israelis increasingly talk about the need to change the equation in Lebanon even as Washington aims to contain the conflict.

As the intertwined chess games grow more complicated, the potential for miscalculation rises.

GAZA IS GROUND ZERO

Hamas says its Oct. 7 attack was a purely Palestinian response to decades of Israeli domination. There is no evidence that Iran, Hezbollah or other allied groups played a direct role or knew about it beforehand.

But when Israel responded by launching one of the 21st century's most devastating military campaigns in Gaza, a besieged enclave home to 2.3 million Palestinians, the so-called Axis of Resistance — Iran and the militant groups it supports across the region — faced pressure to respond.

The Palestinian cause has deep resonance across the region, and leaving Hamas alone to face Israel's fury would have risked un-



In this image provided by the U.S. Navy, the amphibious dock landing ship USS Carter Hall and amphibious assault ship USS Bataan transit the Bab al-Mandeb strait on Aug. 9, 2023.

Associated Press

raveling a military alliance that Iran has been building up since the 1979 Islamic Revolution put it on a collision course with the West. "They don't want war, but at the same time they don't want to let the Israelis keep striking without retaliation," said Qassim Qassir, a Lebanese expert on Hezbollah. "Something big has to happen, without going to war, so that the Israelis and Americans are convinced that there is no way forward," he said.

HEZBOLLAH THREADS THE NEEDLE

Of all Iran's regional proxies, Hezbollah faces the biggest dilemma. If it tolerates Israeli attacks, like the strike in Beirut that killed Hamas' deputy political leader, it risks appearing to be a weak or unreliable ally. But if it triggers a full war, Israel has threatened to wreak major destruction on Lebanon, which is already mired in a severe economic crisis. Even Hezbollah's supporters may see that as too heavy a price to pay for a Palestinian ally. Hezbollah has carried out

strikes along the border nearly every day since the war in Gaza broke out, with the apparent aim of tying down some Israeli troops. Israel has returned fire, but each side appears to be calibrating its actions to limit the intensity.

A Hezbollah barrage of at least 40 rockets fired at an Israeli military base on Saturday sent a message without starting a war, though it may have triggered Monday's strike.

Would 80 rockets have been a step too far? What if someone had been killed? How many casualties would warrant a full-blown offensive? The grim math provides no clear answers.

And experts say it might not be a single strike that does it.

Israel is determined to see tens of thousands of its citizens return to communities near the border with Lebanon that were evacuated under Hezbollah fire nearly three months ago. After Oct. 7, it may no longer be able to tolerate an armed Hezbollah presence on the

other side of the frontier.

Israeli leaders have repeatedly threatened to use military force if Hezbollah doesn't respect a 2006 U.N. cease-fire that ordered the militant group to withdraw from the border.

"Neither side wants a war, but the two sides believe it is inevitable," said Yoel Guzansky, a senior researcher at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University. "Everybody in Israel thinks it's just a matter of time until we need to change the reality" so that people can return to their homes, he said.

U.S. DETERRENCE ONLY GOES SO FAR

The U.S. positioned two aircraft carrier strike groups in the region in October. One is returning home but is being replaced by other warships. The deployments sent an unmistakable warning to Iran and its allies against widening the conflict, but not all seem to have received the message.

Iran-backed militant groups in Syria and Iraq have launched dozens of rocket attacks on U.S. bases. The

Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen have attacked international shipping in the Red Sea, with potential consequences for the world economy. Iran says its allies act on their own and not on orders from Tehran.

Washington has struggled to put together a multinational security force to protect Red Sea shipping. But it appears hesitant to attack the Houthis on land when they appear close to reaching a peace deal with Saudi Arabia after years of war.

Meanwhile, Israeli officials have said the window for its allies to get both Hezbollah and the Houthis to stand down is closing.

HOW DOES THIS END?

The regional tensions are likely to remain high as long as Israel keeps up its offensive in Gaza, which it says is aimed at crushing Hamas. Many wonder if that's possible, given the group's deep roots in Palestinian society, and Israel's own leaders say it will take many more months.

The U.S., which has provided crucial military and diplomatic support for Israel's offensive, is widely seen as the only power capable of ending it. Iran's allies seem to believe Washington will step in if its own costs get too high — hence the attacks on U.S. bases and international shipping.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock are all back in the region this week, with the aim of trying to contain the violence through diplomacy.

But the most important messages will likely be sent by rocket.

"The Americans do not want an open war with Iran, and the Iranians do not want an open war with the United States," said Ali Hamadeh, an analyst who writes for Lebanon's An-Nahar newspaper. "Therefore, there are negotiations by fire." □

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The White House will review Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's lack of disclosure on his hospital stay

By SEUNG MIN KIM, ZEKE MILLER and LOLITA C. BALDOR

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House said Monday the administration will review what rules or procedures weren't followed when Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin did not disclose his hospitalization for days to President Joe Biden and top officials at the Pentagon and the National Security Council. The Pentagon maintained its silence on why Austin was hospitalized and said he has no plans to resign.

"We'll do what's akin to a hot wash and try to see if processes and procedures need to be changed at all or modified so that we can learn from this," John Kirby, the National Security Council spokesman, said when asked whether Biden wanted a review of what happened. Austin, 70, was hospitalized on Jan. 1, which the Pentagon did not disclose to the public until Friday. Biden and Jake Sullivan, the president's na-



U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin makes a joint statement with Israel Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant, after their meeting about Israel's military operation in Gaza, in Tel Aviv, Israel, Monday, Dec. 18, 2023.

Associated Press

tional security adviser, were not aware of Austin's condition until Thursday. The Pentagon still has not said what procedure Austin had on Dec. 22 that eventually put him in such pain that he was taken by ambulance to Walter Reed National

Military Medical Center on New Year's Day and put into intensive care.

"He was conscious, but in quite a bit of pain," Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder, the Pentagon press secretary, told reporters on Monday.

He said Austin, who has re-

sumed his duties, is now out of intensive care and has been moved to a private room. He remains in recovery and his prognosis is "good," but it is not known when he will be released from the hospital. Ryder said Austin has no plans to

resign.

Austin spent the evening of Jan. 1 undergoing tests and evaluation. The next day, "due to the secretary's condition and on the basis of medical advice," some authorities were transferred to his deputy, Kathleen Hicks, through a standard email notification that often does not provide the reason for transfer, Ryder said. Ryder said he, Austin's chief of staff and senior military adviser were notified of the defense secretary's hospitalization on Jan. 2. Hicks, who was in Puerto Rico, was not told the reason for the transfer of authorities until Jan. 4.

The Pentagon has said the chief of staff, Kelly Magsamen, did not inform the White House because she had the flu.

Kirby, speaking to reporters on Air Force One as Biden traveled to South Carolina, said there is an "expectation" among members of Biden's Cabinet that if one becomes hospitalized, "that will be notified up the chain of command." □

Judge in Trump's DC election case is targeted by fake emergency call in latest high-profile swatting

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A home owned by the judge overseeing the federal election subversion case against former president Donald Trump was targeted by a fake emergency call Sunday night, the latest in a spate of similar false swatting reports at the homes of public officials in recent days.

Police responded around 10 p.m. to a report of a shooting at a Washington, D.C., home linked in public records to U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan. But officers quickly found out that no shooting happened, the Metropolitan Police Department said Monday.

Chutkan has received nu-

merous threats since she was assigned Trump's case last year. In August, a Texas woman was arrested after calling the courthouse and threatening to kill Chutkan and other officials. Investigators traced her phone number and she later admitted to making the threatening call, according to court documents.

Sunday's incident comes after a spike in swatting directed at high-profile public officials over the holidays. Those whose homes have been targeted include Republican U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia and Maine Secretary of State Shenna Bellows, a Democrat who removed Trump from the state's presidential primary ballot under the Constitu-

tion's insurrection clause.

State capitols and courthouses in several states were also targeted by bomb threats last week, prompting lockdowns and evacuations. No explosives were found and the FBI called the threats a hoax.

Attorney General Merrick Garland on Friday called the spike in threats "deeply disturbing" in remarks ahead of a private meeting with top Justice Department leaders to address violent crime.

"These threats of violence are unacceptable. They threaten the fabric of our democracy," he said.

Swatting refers to prank calls made to emergency services designed to draw a police response, especially from a SWAT team. □



This undated photo provided by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, shows U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan.

Associated Press

A strong winter storm bears down on a large swath of the U.S. midsection

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A “highly impactful” winter storm is expected to dump as much as a foot of snow Monday across the country’s midsection, where blizzard and winter storm warnings are in effect.

The storm has the potential to bring 8 to 12 inches (20 to 30 centimeters) of snow to a broad area stretching from southeastern Colorado and western Kansas, through eastern Nebraska, large parts of Iowa, northern Missouri and northwestern Illinois, up toward the upper peninsula of Michigan, said Bob Oravec, a forecaster with the National Weather Service in College Park, Maryland.

“So a very, very highly impactful event coming forward,” Oravec said.

There were widespread school closing across eastern Nebraska on Monday ahead of the storm, where forecasters predicted 5 to 8 inches (12 to 20 centimeters) of snow. The district that includes the state capital, Lincoln, is among



Lydialy Santiago, 9, of Rochester, N.Y., laughs as she hits a mogul and gets sprayed with snow after a push from her father, Reynnier Santiago, while sledding on a hill near Cobbs Hill Reservoir in Rochester, Sunday, Jan. 7, 2024.

Associated Press

those where students were told to stay home. Lines were long Sunday at a Target Store drive-up in Omaha as residents stocked up on milk, bread and booze ahead of the storm. Federal courts in Omaha and Lincoln closed at noon Monday. Officials with the U.S.

Army Corps of Engineers announced they began increasing the flow through a Missouri River dam that sits on the Nebraska-South Dakota border near Yankton by 2,000 cubic feet per second to reduce the chance of ice jams forming.

The National Weather Ser-

vice office in Des Moines, Iowa, warned of the potential for “widespread heavy, possibly extreme, snowfall,” with snowfalls of up to 9 to 15 inches (23 to 38 centimeters), “significant impacts” to Monday evening and Tuesday morning commutes, and possible white-

out conditions at times.

The threatening weather has already affected campaigning for Iowa’s Jan. 15 precinct caucuses, where the snow is expected to be followed by frigid temperatures that could drift below 0 degrees (-18 Celsius) by caucus day next week. It forced former President Donald Trump’s campaign to cancel multiple appearances by Arkansas Gov. Sarah Sanders and her father, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, who had been scheduled to court Iowa voters on Trump’s behalf Monday.

In South Dakota, Sioux Falls Mayor Paul TenHaken urged residents not to travel Monday if they did not have to, and to give snowplows time and patience so they can clear the roads.

Parts of northern Missouri braced for up to a foot of snow. Officials in Kansas City, Missouri, announced City Hall would be closed Tuesday and municipal courts would operate remotely. □

Lobster fishers sue to block monitoring laws designed to help save a rare whale

By PATRICK WHITTLE

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — A group of lobster fishermen has sued fishing regulators in federal court, claiming that new electronic monitoring requirements designed to protect rare whales are un-

constitutional.

The new rules went into effect on Dec. 15 and require fishermen with federal lobster fishing permits to install 24-hour electronic tracking devices on their boats. The Maine Department of Marine Resources, which

regulates fisheries in Maine, has promoted the new rule as a way to collect better data that can both benefit the fishery and help save the vanishing North Atlantic right whale, which is vulnerable to potentially lethal entanglement in fishing gear.

Five lobstermen who are members of a lobster fishing union filed their lawsuit in federal court last week. The fishermen said they oppose the requirement that the tracking devices must be operational regardless of what the boat is being used for at the time.

“The plaintiffs contend that minute-by-minute surveillance of Maine’s federally licensed lobster fleet is unconstitutional, unwarranted and unfair to Maine lobstermen, who have proven through the actions

of generations of lobstering families that they are good stewards of the ocean ecosystems essential to their livelihoods,” said Thimi Mina and Alfred Frawley IV, attorneys for the fishermen, in a statement.

Fishing monitoring, whether by human workers or electronic surveillance, has long been a contentious issue among commercial fishermen. Regulators defend the rules as vitally important to collect data used to manage fisheries, but many fishing groups view them as overreach.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission announced the monitoring rules in 2022. The commission said in documents at the time that “it is critical to gather and provide updated” data about commercial fishing to aid the right

whales, which number less than 360.

The Atlantic States commission has not had time to fully review the fishermen’s complaint, a spokesperson for the commission said. Patrick Keliher, commissioner of the Maine Department of Marine Resources, said the data collected by the trackers would benefit lobster fishermen in the long run.

“Data from the trackers is a critical component of the Atlantic states’ effort to ensure that the lobster industry is not burdened with management decisions based on assumptions derived from insufficient data,” Keliher said.

The tracking devices were issued to Maine lobstermen using congressional funding, state officials said. □



A lobster fisherman drops an undersized lobster into the water while fishing Thursday, Sept. 8, 2022, off of Kennebunkport, Maine.

Associated Press

Pope in major policy address calls for universal ban on surrogacy

By NICOLE WINFIELD
Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis called Monday for a universal ban on what he called the “despicable” practice of surrogate motherhood, as he included the “commercialization” of pregnancy in an annual speech listing threats to global peace and human dignity.

In a foreign policy address to ambassadors accredited to the Holy See, Francis lamented that 2024 had dawned at a time in which peace is “increasingly threatened, weakened and in some part lost.”

Citing Russia’s war in Ukraine, the Israel-Hamas war, migration, climate crises and the “immoral” production of nuclear and conventional weapons, Francis delivered a list of the ills afflicting humanity and the increasing violation of international humanitarian law that allows them.

But Francis also listed smaller-scale issues that he said were threats to peace and human dignity, including surrogacy. He said the life of the unborn child must be protected and not “suppressed or turned into an



Pope Francis attends his weekly general audience in the Pope Paul VI hall at the Vatican, Wednesday, Aug. 23, 2023.

object of trafficking.”

“I consider despicable the practice of so-called surrogate motherhood, which represents a grave violation of the dignity of the woman and the child, based on the exploitation of situations of the mother’s material needs,” he said. Saying a child is a gift and “never the basis of a commercial contract,” he

called for a global ban on surrogacy “to prohibit this practice universally.”

Francis has previously voiced the Catholic Church’s opposition to what he has called “uterus for rent.” At the same time, however, the Vatican’s doctrine office has made clear that same-sex parents who resort to surrogacy can have their children

baptized. While commercial surrogacy contracts are common in the United States, including with protections for the mothers, guarantees of independent legal representation and medical coverage, they are banned in parts of Europe including Spain and Italy.

Russia’s war in Ukraine, and the threat to babies born to

surrogate Ukrainian mothers, exposed the country’s thriving industry. Ukraine is one of the few countries that allow surrogacy for foreigners.

Critics say commercial surrogacy targets women who are poor and from vulnerable communities. Supporters say surrogacy gives women a chance to provide children to childless couples, and that commercial contracts protect both the surrogates and the intended parents.

In Italy, where surrogacy has been banned for years, the issue has emerged recently as the conservative government of Premier Giorgia Meloni has opposed registering both parents of children born via surrogacy overseas.

In his geopolitical roundup, Francis singled out Russia by name in noting the “large-scale war waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine.” It marked an unusual break with Francis’ usual tendency to spare Moscow direct, public blame for the invasion when expressing solidarity with the Ukrainian people. □

Associated Press

Dutch anti-Islam lawmaker Geert Wilders has withdrawn a 2018 proposal to ban mosques and the Quran

By MIKE CORDER
Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Far-right Dutch election winner Geert Wilders made a key concession to potential coalition partners on Monday, announcing that he’s withdrawing legislation that he proposed in 2018 that calls for a ban on mosques and the Quran. The move came a day before talks to form the next government were set to resume following the November election.

The abandonment of the bill could be critical in gaining the trust and support of three more mainstream parties that Wilders wants to co-opt into a coalition along with his Party for Free-

dom, known by its Dutch acronym PVV.

One of those parties’ lead-

ers, Pieter Omtzigt of the reformist New Social Contract, has expressed fears



Politician Geert Wilders listens, as the court delivers its verdict against a former Pakistan cricketer accused of incitement to kill, at the high security court building near Schiphol airport, Monday, Sept. 11, 2023.

Associated Press

that some of Wilders’ policies breach the Dutch Constitution that enshrines liberties, including the freedom of religion.

During a parliamentary debate last year after the PVV won 37 seats in the 150-seat lower house of the Dutch parliament in the Nov. 22 general election, Wilders flagged a softening of his party’s strident anti-Islam stance.

“Sometimes I will have to withdraw proposals and I will do that,” Wilders said in the debate. “I will show the Netherlands, the legislature, Mr. Omtzigt’s party anybody who wants to hear it that we will adapt our rules to the constitution and bring our proposals in

line with it.”

Wilders is due to resume coalition talks on Tuesday with Omtzigt, and the leaders of two other parties the center-right People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy of outgoing Prime Minister Mark Rutte and the Farmer Citizen Movement led by Caroline van der Plas.

Among three pieces of legislation axed by Wilders Party for Freedom was one dating back to 2018 that proposes banning “Islamic expressions.”

The text of the bill labels Islam a “violent, totalitarian ideology” and proposes bans on mosques, the Quran, Islamic schools and the wearing of burqas and niqabs. □

North Korea's Kim turns 40. But there are no public celebrations of his birthday

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM** and **JI-WON SONG**
Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) —

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un turned 40 on Monday with no announced public celebrations at home, after he entered the new year with artillery barrages into the sea and vows to expand his nuclear arsenal.

Since taking power in late 2011, Kim, the third generation of his family to rule North Korea, is believed to have established an absolute leadership similar to his predecessors. But his birthday has yet to be officially celebrated, unlike his late father Kim Jong Il and grandfather Kim Il Sung. Their birthdays are two of the North's biggest holidays and are marked with great fanfare, loyalty campaigns and sometimes massive military parades.

On Monday, North Korea's state news agency published a lengthy article extolling Kim's guidance of major construction projects in the past decade. It also reported Kim visited a chicken farm with his daughter the previous day.



In this photo provided on Monday, Jan. 8, 2024, by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, center, with his daughter visits a newly-built poultry factory in Hwangju County of North Hwanghae Province on Jan. 7, 2024.

But it made no mention of his birthday.

Some observers speculate Kim may think he's still relatively too young or needs bigger achievements to hold such lavish birthday festivities. Others say the lack of a public birthday bash may be related to his concerns about attention to his late Japan-born

mother.

Kim's headlong pursuit of a bigger nuclear arsenal has invited punishing U.S.-led sanctions, which together with border closures during the pandemic were believed to have badly hurt the North's fragile economy. Kim has subsequently admitted policy failures as his vow that North Ko-

rea would "never have to tighten their belts again" remained unfulfilled.

"For Kim, it's still probably politically burdensome to idolize himself as he's still young and hasn't accumulated much achievements," said Hong Min, an analyst at Seoul's Korea Institute for National Unification.

Kim Yeol Soo, an expert at South Korea's Korea Institute for Military Affairs, said it will likely take some time for his birthday to become an official holiday because elderly members of the North's ruling elite would still think he's too young.

Birthdays are central to the mythology of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, who had ruled North Korea with a god-like status since the country's founding in 1948. Their birthdays April 15 for Kim Il Sung, and Feb. 16 for Kim Jong Il are typically celebrated with tributes to their giant statues, dance parties, fireworks and art performances. On some milestone birthdays, North Korea's military holds huge parades with goose-stepping soldiers and powerful weapons capable of targeting the U.S. and South Korea. Kim Il Sung's birthday was designated as an official holiday in 1968 when he turned 56, according to a website run by South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles relations with North Korea. Kim Jong Il's birthday reportedly became an official holiday in 1982, when he turned 40. □

Associated Press

A notorious Ecuadorian gang leader vanishes from prison and authorities investigate if he escaped

QUITO, Ecuador (AP) — A convicted leader of one of the most powerful drug gangs in Ecuador has

vanished from the prison where he was serving his sentence, and authorities were investigating whether

he escaped like he did a decade ago from another facility.

Ecuadorian authorities reported Sunday that Adolfo Macías, alias "Fito" and leader of Los Choneros gang, wasn't in his cell, and by Monday they hadn't found him or explained what had happened.

The country's correction system office said Monday that they were planning to provide more information about the case. Police general commander César Zapata told the media Sunday night that Macías had disappeared from his cell, and that they were investigating.

Ecuador's prosecutors of-

fice tweeted Sunday that it was investigating the case as a probable "prisoner's escape."

Macías was convicted of drug trafficking, murder and organized crime. He was serving a 34-year sentence in La Regional prison of the port of Guayaquil, and he was scheduled on Sunday to be transferred to a maximum security facility in the same city.

Los Choneros is one of the Ecuadorian gangs considered by authorities as responsible for a spike in violence over the past years that reached a new level last year with the assassination of the presidential candidate Fernando Vil-

lavencio. The gang has links with Mexico's Sinaloa cartel, according to authorities.

The politician had said that the criminal group led by "Fito" threatened him, but so far authorities haven't directly accused Macías or his group of being behind Villavicencio's murder.

Days after Villavicencio's killing, Macías was moved out of La Regional to the maximum security prison in the same large complex of detention facilities in Guayaquil, but he was returned to the same lighter security prison within less than a month without any explanation. □



Police and soldiers stand outside El Inca prison after riots began inside in Quito, Ecuador, Monday, Jan. 8, 2024.

Associated Press

Create museum memories

ORANJESTAD — Museums are an integral part of conserving and honoring cultures, and Aruba is no exception. Our Island has a wide selection of various museums for our locals and visitors to see. Take this opportunity to learn about our island and experience a different day beyond the beach. Let us introduce to you these museums.

Museum of Industry Aruba

The Museum of Industry is located in San Nicolas—better known as the art capital of Aruba. This museum exhibits the industrial history of gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and tourism through elaborated displays and multimedia installations.

The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history, which began in the 19th century. The Water Tower was built in 1939 and consists of three sections: the substructure, the high-rising vertical shaft, and the tank at the top. The Water Tow-

er was purchased by the Monuments Fund in 2003 so it can be restored and preserved as one of Aruba's monuments. The Museum of Industry is part of Aruba Museum Foundation (Fundacion Museo Aruban), which is a foundation set to maintain, preserve, and protect the Aruban cultural sector, history, and nature. The museum of Industry is open daily from 9 am till 6 pm.

For more information, check out their Facebook page Museum of Industry Aruba.

Archaeological Museum of Aruba

The Archaeological Museum of Aruba is located at Schelpstraat 42 in downtown Oranjestad. The renovated historic Ecury complex in the area has been transformed from a family home to a modern museum that preserves Aruba's Amerindian cultural heritage. This 21st century museum is especially designed to

preserve valuable artifacts dating back to the Pre-Ceramic period of 2500 BC.

In the late 1980's, AMA identified its need for an adequate housing for its collection and activities. After studying various options, a project proposal was drawn up, including the acquisition and restoration of historical buildings in downtown Oranjestad.

These historical buildings were formerly the property of the Ecury family. The "Ecury Complex", is a cluster of single and two-story historic buildings, mainly Dutch colonial architecture from the late 19th and 20th century on a plot of approximately 1.700 m2.

In 1997, the Aruban Government bought the complex for the National Archaeological Museum project. In 2004, a financial agreement was signed with the European Development Fund and in 2006, restoration and construction work



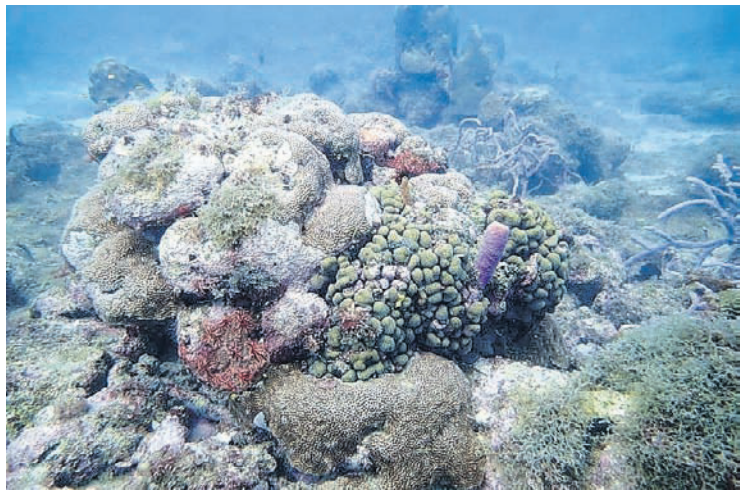
began on the monumental buildings and the soon-to-be exhibition space. In December 2007, the key to the complex was delivered and the museum's employees moved to the new location. The final design for the exhibit was completed in November 2007 and the permanent exhibit, financed by the Aruban Government and the Union of Cultural Organizations (UNOCA), opened in July 2009.

At the new location, the National Archaeological Museum Aruba disposes of approximately 500 m2 for its permanent exhibit. This exhibit conveys information

on the origin and culture of the first inhabitants of the island through archaeological objects and modern exhibition techniques. The new permanent exhibit gives the visitor an insight into the cultures that inhabited the island in Pre-Historical and Early Historical times. The museum also hosts attractive public programs, including lectures, educational projects, temporary exhibits and workshops.

The museum is open daily from 9:30 am till 4:30 pm. For more information check out the Facebook page Museo Arqueologico Nacional Aruba. □

Aruba's Bocas: home to the rarest fossil reefs on the planet!



(Oranjestad)— If you've been to the northern coast of Aruba already, you've probably noticed how the ground differs entirely from the sandy beaches on the southern part of the island. These hard surfaces, with sharp bumps and holes are actually fossilized coral reefs, of which its growth and changes can be traced back to the last glacial period.

On May 30 2023, geoscientists, Dr. Patrick Boyden from the Marum research

faculty at the University of Bremen, Prof. dr. Alessio Rovere from the Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Prof. dr. Gianfranco Scicchitano, from the University of Bari Aldo Moro, presented their research on these fossilized coral reefs at the University of Aruba. Their focus for their research included studying the health and formation patterns of these coral reefs, and to investigate how these reefs have responded and can respond to fluctuating sea levels or extreme weather,

like hurricanes and tsunamis.

Through underwater and land surveillance, and 3D models of the reefs, they were able to narrow down when these formations started to take place. They were also able to track the fluctuation of sea levels during the past hundred or even thousands of years, and the effects that this fluctuation has had on the coral reefs of the windward side of Aruba.

These findings can certainly put things into perspective. The ground on which we have walked many times in the northern part of the island hold such rich history, history that dates back to a time that most of us cannot even imagine. As the scientists themselves have pointed out, these fossilized reefs on the windward side are truly an incredible and rare remnant of geological history, as they provide a clear view of how these reefs have formed.

This research is also important for the future of coral reefs on the island. By studying rising sea levels and climate impact on these coral reefs, we are able to take concrete action in protecting and preserving our coral reefs. So, if you are ever visiting one of the bocas or driving along the northern part of the island, please be conscious to help protect our natural historical remnant. Oh, and wear (coral-friendly) sunscreen! □





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The 70th Carnival season began with a colorful and exciting “Fakkel” Parade!



(Oranjestad)—Aruba got to witness the opening parade of this year's Carnival season during the “Fakkel” parade Saturday night. The night was full of colorful, bright lights, upbeat Soca music and endless dancing!

For this parade, 10 thousand people were in attendance, all enjoying the breezy, colorful atmosphere accompanied by Soca music from 9 different groups. Each group rocked it own theme throughout the night, and the parade walkers were seen decorated with glitter, sequins and electric lights wrapped around their hands, neck and waist.

On Friday, January 6th, one day before the Fakkel parade, Aruba got to see a tribute show honoring 70 years of the Carnival tradition on the island, as well as paying respects to musicians and bands that have contributed to what makes the Aruban Carnival so unique and deeply cherished by locals.

Want to be part of the Carnival experience this coming two months? Here is a schedule of upcoming Carnival activities and parades! Don't forget to bring some seats and drinks, and enjoy an integral part of the Aruban culture with your friends, family and locals! □



CARNIVAL 70 ISLA DI CARNAVAL			SETAR		Ban!		Guardian Group	
SCHEDULE: JANUARY 2024			AUA		Chill		EZAIR	
FRI 05	Tribute of 70 Years of Carnival Music	Renaissance Convention Center 8:30PM	CATC		ELMAR		Garage Central	
SAT 06	Parada di Flambeu	Oranjestad 8:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
SUN 07	Eleccion di Prins cu Pancho	Centro di Bario Brazil 6:30PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
WED 10	Inscripcion Festival di Tumba 52	Balashi Beer Garden 7:00PM - 9:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
THU 11	Festival di Tumba Infantil y Hubenil	Aruba Entertainment Center Dakota 6:30PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
FRI 12	EPI Queen Election	EPI Campus 7:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
FRI 12	Calypso Roadmarch Contest Infantil y Hubenil	Aruba Entertainment Center Dakota 6:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
SAT 13	Eleccion di Reina Infantil y Hubenil	Aruba Entertainment Center Dakota 7:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
SUN 14	Eleccion di Reina Grandi y Señora Carnaval	Aruba Entertainment Center Dakota 7:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
FRI 19	Back 2 D Park with Mighty Talent & the Legends	Centro di Bario Brazil 8:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
SAT 20	Festival di Tumba 52	Balashi Beer Garden 8:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
SUN 21	Parada di Fantasia	San Nicolaas 2:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
WED 24	Caya Paden	Renaissance Convention Center 9:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
THU 25	Dia di Betico		SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
FRI 26	Aruba Caiso & Soca Monarch	Aruba Carnival & Entertainment Village 8:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
SAT 27	Parada di Mucha Noord	Noord 2:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
SAT 27	Aruba Caiso & Soca Monarch	Aruba Carnival & Entertainment Village 8:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
SUN 28	Traspaso di Mando	Bestuurkantoor 10:00AM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
SUN 28	Parada di Mucha Oranjestad	Oranjestad 1:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
WED 31	North International Sunset Parade	Noord 7:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	

CARNIVAL 70 ISLA DI CARNAVAL			SETAR		Ban!		Guardian Group	
SCHEDULE: FEBRUARY 2024			AUA		Chill		EZAIR	
FRI 02	Parada Escolar Scolnan Basico Oranjestad	Oranjestad 10:00AM	CATC		ELMAR		Garage Central	
FRI 02	United Fete	Aruba Carnival & Entertainment Village 8:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
FRI 02	Mascarade Parade Savaneta	Ward di Polis Savaneta pa Centro di Bario Savaneta 8:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
FRI 02	Welcome to Jouve "United We Stand"	San Nicolaas 9:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
SAT 03	Jouvert Morning	San Nicolaas 3:00AM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
SAT 03	Aruba's Grand Lighting Parade	Oranjestad 8:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
SUN 04	Parada di Mucha San Nicolaas	San Nicolaas 2:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
SUN 04	Kimamento di Momito	Aruba Carnival & Entertainment Village 7:00PM - 9:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
WED 07	Parada di Luz San Nicolaas	San Nicolaas 8:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
FRI 09	Parada Escolar Oranjestad	Oranjestad 10:00AM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
FRI 09	Parada Escolar San Nicolaas	San Nicolaas 10:00AM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
SAT 10	Grand Carnival Parade San Nicolaas	San Nicolaas 11:00AM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
SUN 11	Aruba's 70th Grand Carnival Parade	Oranjestad 10:00AM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
SUN 11	Kimamento di Momo	Aruba Harbour Arena 7:00PM - 10:00PM	SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
MON 12	Carnival Monday		SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	
WED 14	Diaranson di Shinishi		SANTANA		Garage Central		Aruba	

Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort Triumphs with Triple Accolades: Environmental Sustainability, Innovative Sales & Marketing, Leadership Excellence

Eagle Beach – Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort, Aruba, a beacon of sustainable luxury in the heart of Eagle Beach, proudly announces a trifecta of honors from the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) and Caribbean Media Exchange (CMEx) that underscore its commitment to excellence in various facets of the hospitality industry.

CHTA CHIEF Awards: a long legacy

The legacy of Bucuti & Tara earning CHTA CHIEF Awards recognition continued in 2023 at the gathering in Miami, Nov. 30 - Dec. 1. At this year's Awards luncheon, Bucuti & Tara was honored as the Hall of Fame Winner for Environmental Sustainability. First awarded this in 2019, Bucuti & Tara was the inaugural winner and the only one with double wins.

The CHTA CHIEF Hall of Fame for Environmental Sustainability acknowledges Bucuti & Tara's dedication to setting the standard for sustainable tourism practices, including energy efficiency, waste reduction, and conservation initiatives. Visionary Owner/CEO Ewald Biemans, expressed gratitude for the recognition, stating, "At Bucuti & Tara, we believe that memorable vacations in a tranquil setting of laidback luxury and sustainability can coexist harmoniously. This award reflects



our ongoing commitment to providing a world-class experience while preserving the natural beauty of our environment. Bucuti & Tara always welcomes drawing the spotlight to Aruba."

Hot off of the last win as the CHTA CHIEF 2022 Award winner for Sales & Marketing, the esteemed adults only resort once again earned a place on the podium as a finalist for the CHTA CHIEF 2023 Award for Innovative Sales & Marketing. This year's initiative was the resort's popular "What We Are Not" social media campaign, which also gained a lot of buzz throughout the CHIEF conference. The resort's innovative approaches in promoting responsible tourism and unique marketing strategies have garnered attention within the industry.

CMEx Leadership Award 2023

Furthermore, Ewald Biemans, a trailblazer in the hospitality sector, has been honored with a Caribbean Media Exchange (CMEx) Leadership Award 2023. According to CMEx, this accolade recognizing Biemans is to show the organization's "appreciation for exceptional individuals who have significantly contributed to enhancing tourism in our region through their diligent work and outreach efforts." This includes Biemans' longstanding leadership in promoting sustainable tourism and significant contributions to the Caribbean hospitality industry."

Biemans shared, "Thank you to CMEx for this Leadership Award recognizing Bucuti & Tara and my shared commitment to communicating the Caribbean's progress, rich culture and sustainable solutions with one another and with the world."

Bucuti & Tara and Biemans continue together to be a beacon of excellence for commitment to environmental sustainability, innovative marketing endeavors, superb guest experience and visionary leadership.

Learn more by visiting Bucuti.com



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Aruba's cultural and literary development: Then and now

(Oranjestad)—The Aruban culture has seen many substantial developments over the course of a century. With the introduction of the Lago Refinery at the turn of the 20th century, followed by the breakout of the Second World War and the general incentive for political independence during the mid-century, a cultural identity on the island began to take form and have since developed through international and local influences.

In the pre-industrial era of the 19th century, much could not be said about a cultural identity on the island. Still being a part of a Dutch colonial territory at the time, as well as not having political or economic autonomy (Curacao was the center of commerce, cultural life, and political management of the Netherland Antilles at the time), the small population of Aruba consisted mostly of farmers and fishermen, tending to their crops and their cattle, or going out to fish to provide for their family. As Quito Nicolaas states in his article *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* (Literary History of Aruba: Cultural Life), "during the pre-industrial period, there were no significant economic activity that could have created a cultural ambience, with



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only one way to generate profit at the time for the subsistence of Aruban families."

It wasn't until the introduction of the Lago Refinery in San Nicolas in 1928, that the island saw a small boom in cultural manifestations and entertainment, as farmers left the 'cunucu' (country) life to work in the refinery, which resulted in Aruba acquiring a different economic pillar. Before this, entertainment and cultural manifestations were mostly experienced by local parishes and the island's elite, who often partook in cultural and entertaining activities around the island, like going to the movie theater or coming together to share poetry on Sundays after church.

Literary life

Throughout the 19th century and up until the 1940s, there were also not much

trace of a cultural climate for the cultural-literary sector on the island. Primary education was introduced on the island in the mid-19th century, followed by secondary and higher education around the late 30's and 40's. It wasn't until the 1950s, with the introduction of the E.R.N.A agreement in 1951 and the signing of the Statute in 1954, which allowed more space for and control over the economic and cultural development of Aruba, that the literary life on the island began to grow substantially compared to decades before. This was in response to local institutions established in the 1940s for cultural and literary growth on the island, but that did not yet capture the attention of the general public. The 1950 brought with it a boom of literary production on the island, like those of V.S. Piterrella, as well as migrant authors José

Ramón Vicioso y Rings William Rufus, who have also contributed to the literary development on the island. The literary movement was further promoted by local broadcasters Voz di Aruba and Radio Kelkboom, with their regular broadcast of literary works.

The 50s and 60s also saw the influence of international cultures, especially that of the United States. During this time, because of international influences as well as the continued prosperity of the oil refinery, cultural traditions in Aruba began to really take form and become widespread, as different worldly and local concepts were introduced in the Aruban society. With the establishment of local television broadcast station Tele-Aruba in 1963, and with time and possibilities, local programs such as "Nos Tera" ("Our Land") started to pay more attention to the Aruban culture and worked to form a cultural consciousness within the community. The 1960s also saw the rise of local authors and artists, who were more comfortable in producing works in our native tongue, Papiamentu,

but who also produced works in Spanish, English and Dutch. This new phenomenon was in response to the interaction between economic growth, individual prosperity, cultural life and literary expression.

The 21st century

Nowadays, international influence on our culture is still prevalent, especially those from Latin America, the United States and The Netherlands. Nevertheless, there also exists a strong cultural identity and traditions that are exclusive to the Aruban culture, often manifesting during traditional celebrations, like Dia di San Juan/ Dera Gai (St. John's Day), Dia di Himno y Bandera (National Hymn and Flag Day), Camping during Easter and much more. With the surge of social media in the last decade, artistic voices, especially those of the younger generation, has become even more prevalent and easily accessible to the community of Aruba through online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. □

Source: *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* by J.R. "Quito" Nicolaas



Did you know about...

Basic driving rules on Aruba (part 2)

(Oranjestad)—In Yesterday's issue, we've provided some basic rules when driving on the four-lane highways and roundabouts on the island. Today, we want to offer you more tips and tricks when it comes to driving on the roads and highways of Aruba.

Speed limit in certain areas

As mentioned in yesterday's issue, the legal minimum and maximum speed limit on the island is 50 and 80 km/h respectively. However, there are some areas where it is mandated to drive up to a certain speed. This is always indicated by a circular traffic sign with red border and the number 50 on it. Signs like these are always paired

by a similar sign with the number crossed out further down the road. This means that the mandate for this speed is now over; you may increase your velocity. Red borders on traffic sign—whether it's a circle or triangle—usually signal a warning, prohibition or preference.

Besides the "50" sign, you may also

encounter a traffic sign that says "bebouwde kom". These can be found in San Nicolas and Oranjestad. Bebouwde kom signs are rectangular and blue, and essentially tell you that you are in a heavily inhabited area. The maximum speed limit in a bebouwde kom is 50 km/h. Just like the previous pair, bebouwde kom signs are also paired with a similar sign crossed out.

Priority signs

On the main roads of Aruba (not the highways), you may see a yellow, squared sign with a white border. This sign tells you that on this road, you have priority and all other traffic should yield to you. This sign can be seen in Savaneta for example. So, if you are driving on the main road in Savaneta going to San Nicolas, you are driving on a single long road, and other cars that want to get on this main road or cross it, either from an intersection or from a dirt road, must all wait until traffic on the main road is clear. In other words, you do not have to stop for them. This sign too has a counter part that indicates that your priority is over.

Another priority sign you may encounter is a triangle sign with a red border and something that looks like a cross. You'll see this sign in an intersection. The general rule of thumb for crossing an intersection that do not contain traffic lights, roundabouts, sign or arrows on the road, is to always yield for traffic on your right. However, if you encounter this sign on your side of the intersection, you have priority over the other cars, even the one on your right.

However, be careful not to confuse this sign with a similar up-side down triangle, also found on intersections. This sign is a prohibition sign, telling you that you have to stop and give other cars priority. Of course you also have a "stop" sign that mean the same thing. The stop sign is generally used for tricky intersections with minimal view of opposite incoming traffic.

These are some of the basic rules that you would have to know if you decide to drive on the island. These are of course other traffic signs, and we recommend you visit aruba-travelguide.com for an extensive overview of all traffic signs used on Aruba. □

Picture credits: aruba-travelguide.com



bebouwde kom



end bebouwde kom



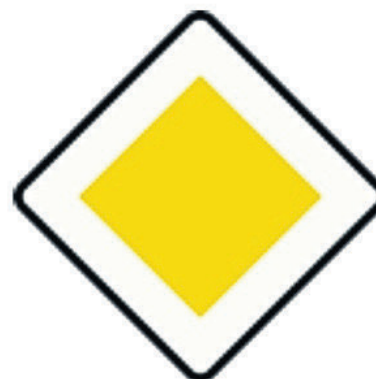
end priority



end speed limit



intersection priority



priority



speed limit



stop sign



triangle stop sign

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 42 Pestors
1 "Serpico" star

7 Auction cry

11 Venus's love

12 Region

13 Supple

15 Clickable pictures

16 Shore eroder

18 Washer unit

21 Candidate of 2000

22 Did the tango

24 King Kong, for one

25 Spotted

26 Letter after sigma

27 Marbles, so to speak

29 Chilly

30 Letter after epsilon

31 Cruise stop

32 Coffee add-in

34 Not talkative

40 Buffalo's lake

41 Smitten

DOWN

1 Buddy

2 Bustle

3 Dove's cry

4 Contained

5 Brother's daughter

6 Capital on a fjord

7 Bible strongman

8 Sphere

9 Sheltered side

10 Pop

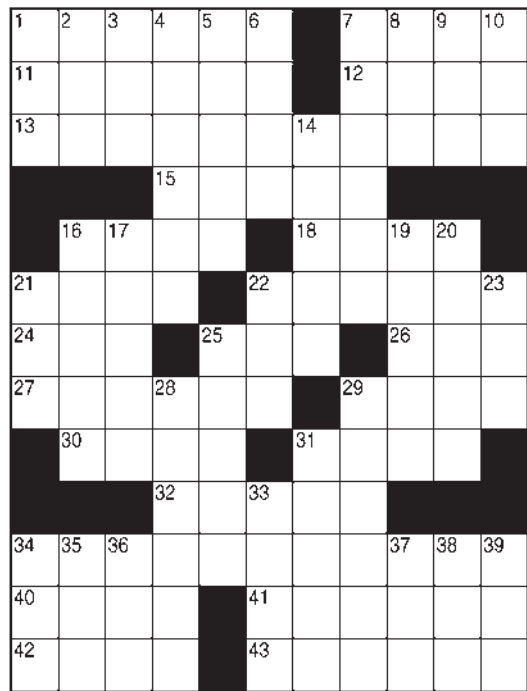
14 Relative by marriage

16 Yellow gem

TAUPE TASTE
ULTRA ONEAL
BLUES STARS
DEBT SPA
ITS A DEAL
RIOT EDICTS
ANDOR AGREE
STARES HEAT
SCATTERS
ADA ALAN
DUCKS KINGS
ADMIT ENSUE
MEETS AGATE

Yesterday's answer

17 Singer 31 Coat on the wall
Cara
19 Cast 33 Yale students
member
20 Traded 34 Common bill
bill
21 Ozone, e.g. 35 Lyricist Gershwin
22 Calendar box 36 Jazz job
23 Failure 37 Campaign pro
25 Set off 38 Genesis name
28 Longings 39 — Moines
Be sub-missive



1-9

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

1-9 CRYPTOQUOTE

L W B A I I A M P R F L W D

L W P A M M W S W Y W S K X A M P I W

T F S M A M P . — T W A X R W S

W G C N D S R

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: JANUARY IS HERE, WITH EYES THAT KEENLY GLOW, A FROST-MAILED WARRIOR STRIDING A SHADOWY STEED OF SNOW. — EDGAR FAWCETT

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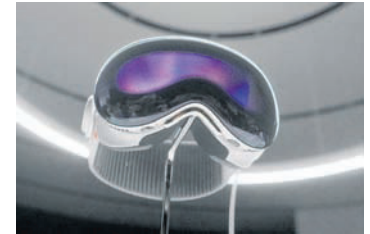
ARUBA TODAY **BONDIA**
How to reach us!
Map showing location in Downtown Aruba near Weststraat, Schepstraat, and L.G. Smith Boulevard. Includes a magnifying glass icon over the Bondia logo.

Apple's Vision Pro headset launches next month as company seeks to expand mixed-reality market

By MICHAEL LIETKE

AP Technology Writer

Apple's high-priced headset for toggling between the real and digital world will be available in its stores beginning Feb. 2, launching the trendsetting company's push to broaden the appeal of what so far has been a niche technology. Apple unveiled the sleek \$3,500 goggles at a software conference held at its Cupertino, California, headquarters eight months ago an event that was designed to encourage developers to make apps tailored for a device that projects users into three-dimensional simulations of reality. Apple's announcement coincides with a major consumer electronics show in Las Vegas where the company has long been conspicuously absent. Apple says the goggles' operating system will be compatible with more



than 1 million apps designed for the iPhone and iPad. Pre-orders begin Jan. 19, but buyers will have to go to a store to be properly fitted for the goggles, which are controlled with the eyes and a few simple hand gestures.

Although Facebook owner Meta Platforms and other companies have been making virtual reality headsets for years with limited success, many industry analysts believe Apple has the potential to expand the technology's audience beyond the video gamers and mostly tech nerds that have embraced it so far.



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In 'The Teachers' Lounge,' one middle school as microcosm of a troubled world

By JOCELYN NOVECK
AP National Writer

What happens in the teachers' lounge, anyway? When we were kids, that closed door seemed so tantalizingly forbidding, though it probably only hid some coffee-sipping, light chitchat and paper-grading.

Well, not in the brilliantly taut and absorbing "The Teachers' Lounge," in which that room and gradually, the whole school around it hosts an expanding web of uneasy power dynamics, mutual suspicion and misinformation, and that's just for starters. This film also explores cancel culture, institutional racism, privacy rights and even censorship and press freedom.

That's a lot for one middle school. But writer-director İlker Çatak pulls it off, aided by excellent performances all around and two truly superb ones: Leonie Benesch as an idealistic new teacher and a heartbreaking Leo Stettinisch as her troubled student. (The film, Germany's submission to the Academy Awards, has justifiably made the short list for best international feature.) "The Teachers' Lounge"



This image released by Sony Pictures Classics shows Leonie Benesch in a scene from "The Teachers' Lounge."

dives immediately into the controversy that will tear this modern, bustling school apart. Carla Nowak (Benesch) is called to an uncomfortable meeting between school officials and two student representatives of her sixth-grade class. The students are be-

ing grilled as to which fellow classmates may have been responsible for a series of thefts essentially, they're being asked to denounce friends without evidence. Carla is angry at the tactic, but lacks the confidence to speak out.

She's even more appalled

by what happens next: The principal and her colleagues come to her classroom, ask the girls to leave and force the boys to surrender their wallets for inspection (why only boys?) Of course, the adults note unconvincingly, the process is entirely voluntary but

if the students have nothing to hide, there's nothing to fear. One boy seems to have a lot of money, but his Turkish immigrant parents, summoned to the school, explain indignantly (in a typically bristling, beautifully modulated scene) that they'd given him money to buy a video game as a gift. They argue that he's being racially profiled.

Already, back in the teachers' lounge, Carla is clashing with her more aggressive colleagues. And then, in her misguided zeal to identify the real thief and exonerate her kids, she steps right into an ethical morass. Leaving her wallet in her coat on a chair, and setting her laptop camera to record, she soon has video evidence just an arm, in a distinctive blouse of someone stealing from her pocket. It only takes a moment to track down the wearer of that blouse.

Perhaps because Benesch is such an effortlessly empathetic actor, she makes Carla's decision to confront the person she suspects and then, to hand over the video feel logical, like something anyone might do. □

Associated Press

Idris Elba calls for tougher action on knife crime after a spate of teen killings in Britain

LONDON (AP) — Actor Idris Elba on Monday urged the British government to ban machetes and serrated "zombie" knives to help stop young people falling victim to knife crime.

The London-born star of "The Wire" and "Luther" joined protesters from the "Don't Stop Your Future" campaign outside Parliament, posing with clothes and shoes representing people killed by knives.

In the U.K, which has strict gun-control laws, about four in 10 homicides involve a knife or sharp instrument. There is particular concern about knife crime involving young people in Britain's

cities. In London, 21 teenagers were killed in 2023, 18



British Actor Idris Elba, next to Yemi Hughes, mother of a knife crime victim, stand in Parliament Square with clothing representing the human cost of UK Knife Crime in London, Monday, Jan. 8, 2024, as he calls on the government to take immediate action to prevent serious youth violence.

Associated Press

of whom were stabbed to death.

"I can't stay silent as more young lives are lost to these brutal and heartless crimes," Elba said. "As school returns, too many young people will not be joining their classmates and too many grieving families have lost a young person they love in recent years." The government announced a ban on machetes and knives that are designed to look threatening in August 2023, but the law has yet to be approved by Parliament.

Elba also said technology companies should be held accountable for knife im-

agery on mobile phones.

"I can pick up a phone right now, type in knives and I'll get inundated with adverts for them," he said. "We should find a way to deter tech companies, advertising, to put that away." Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesman, Max Blain, said knife crime and hospital admissions for stabbings had both fallen compared to the pre-pandemic year of 2019-2020.

"But, still, we know knife crime devastates lives," he said. "We do want to do more. It's welcome that Idris Elba and others continue to shine a light on this important issue." □

Tiger Woods, Nike end partnership after more than 27 years

By **DOUG FERGUSON**
AP Golf Writer

Tiger Woods has gone from "Hello, world," to saying goodbye to Nike.

Woods ended months of speculation by making it official Monday that the partnership between golf's biggest star and the powerful Swoosh brand is ending after 27 years, a move that raises questions about the future of both in the sport.

Woods in a social media post thanked Nike co-founder Phil Knight for his "passion and vision" that brought them together when he turned pro.

"Over 27 years ago, I was fortunate to start a partnership with one of the most iconic brands in the world," Woods wrote. "The days since have been filled with so many amazing moments and memories, if I started naming them, I could go on forever."

Mark Steinberg, his agent at Excel Sports, confirmed the end of the deal that began in 1996 when Woods turned pro after winning his third straight U.S. Amateur. "I guess, hello world, huh?" a 20-year-old Woods said at the Greater Milwaukee Open.

Nike launched a "Hello, World" campaign two days later, and Woods lived up to the hype. Within eight



In this June 19, 2004, file photo, Tiger Woods reacts on the fifth fairway after his shot toward the green during the third round of the U.S. at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club in Southampton, N.Y.

Associated Press

months, he already had four wins, including the watershed Masters victory that made him the first golfer of Black heritage to win a major.

"It was time for the next chapter," Steinberg told The Associated Press. "Amazing run. Great part-

nership."

Nike also posted to social media, saying in a photo, "It was a hell of a round, Tiger."

"Tiger, you challenged your competition, stereotypes, conventions, the old school way of thinking," the Nike post was captioned.

"You challenged the entire institution of golf. You challenged us. And most of all, yourself. And for that challenge we're grateful."

Woods signed a five-year deal worth \$40 million when he turned pro. It was shocking money at the time to most in the industry except Nike, and his father.

"Chump change," the late Earl Woods once said, and he was proven correct. Woods renewed the deal believed to be worth over \$100 million in 2001. His eight-year deal in 2006 was reported to be \$160 million, and his latest deal was signed in 2013 for a reported \$200 million.

As recognizable as any athlete in the world, Woods became the face of Nike Golf and had his own "TW" brand.

On the golf course, Woods set records as the youngest to win the Grand Slam at age 24, the only player to hold all four major titles at the same time and his 15-shot win at the U.S. Open, the largest margin for a major in golf history.

But there were signs in recent years of a fractured relationship. Woods returned from his February 2021 car crash that shattered bones in his right leg by wearing FootJoy shoes, saying it was a better feel considering his injuries.

Woods remained in them Nike has a long history making shoes even until the PNC Championship last month that he played with his son.

When asked about his deal with Nike, Woods replied, "I'm still wearing their product," and sternly repeated the phrase when asked if this was the end of his deal. More than just a face, Woods unwittingly delivered big moments for Nike, none greater than his 2005 Masters victory when he hit a pitch from below the 16th green that went up the slope and then rolled back toward the hole. The ball hung on the edge for a full second the swoosh in full view before it dropped. It remains one of the most famous moments in golf's most-watched tournament.

He also was filming a commercial one year when between takes, Woods began bouncing the golf ball off his club. That led to a spot where he bounced the ball off the club, between his legs, behind his back, before hitting the ball in mid-air. "Throughout the course of our partnership, we have witnessed along with the rest of the world, how Tiger not only redefined the sport of golf, but broke barriers for all of sport," Nike said in a statement. □

Two seeded players lose in first round at the Adelaide International



Jessica Pegula of the United States is framed by her racquet as she hits a return shot to Ajla Tomljanovic of Australia during the United Cup tennis tournament in Perth, Australia, Monday, Jan. 1, 2024

Associated Press

ADELAIDE, Australia, (AP) — Former French Open champion Barbora Krejickova and Beatriz Haddad Maia lost their first-round matches Monday at the Adelaide International. Qualifier Anna Kalinskaya beat 2021 Roland Garros winner and No. 4-seeded Krejickova 7-5, 3-6, 7-5. Kalinskaya had three match points on Krejickova's serve when leading 6-5 in the deciding set and converted the third for the win.

Former French Open finalist Pavlyuchenkova breezed through qualifying and beat fifth-seeded Haddad Maia 6-3, 6-4.

The joint WTA-ATP tournament is the biggest tune-up event this week for the Australian Open, which begins on Sunday at Melbourne Park.

In another first-round Adelaide result, Ana Bogdan beat Katie Boulter, who represented Britain at last week's United Cup tournament, 6-3, 6-4.

Elena Rybakina, who won Sunday's Brisbane International, and Jessica Pegula are the top women's seeds. Neither played Monday.

Tommy Paul is the top-seeded player in the ATP portion of the tournament. In a first-round result Monday, Jack Draper beat fifth-seeded Sebastian Baez 6-1, 6-3.

MEHRTENS ADVANCES AT HOBART

At the Hobart International WTA tournament, top-seeded Elise Mertens, who won the tournament in 2017 and 2018, beat 2022 Australian Open finalist Danielle Collins 6-2, 6-3.

"(Collins is) definitely a tough opponent in the first round. She can definitely strike the ball very hard," Mertens said. "The weather was in my advantage, a little bit more wind." □

Bills, Cowboys were the NFL's biggest winners in Week 18, securing the No. 2 seeds

By **ROB MAADDI**
AP Pro Football Writer

Dak Prescott and the Dallas Cowboys made sure they'll start the playoffs at home, where they're undefeated. Josh Allen and the Buffalo Bills are going home with a division title instead of heading back to Miami for a rematch.

The NFL playoff field is set. Fourteen teams will compete for a trip to Super Bowl 58 in Las Vegas next month. The postseason starts with six games across three days over wild-card weekend.

The Bills rallied for a 21-14 win over the Dolphins on Sunday night to clinch their fourth straight AFC East title and the No. 2 seed. The Packers and Buccaneers got in with wins earlier in the day. The Steelers secured their spot when the Jaguars collapsed in Tennessee. Jacksonville's loss gave the Texans a division title, completing their last-to-first turnaround.

No. 1 seeds Baltimore and San Francisco rested several starters in Week 18. The Lions and Eagles didn't because they had a shot at the NFC's No. 2 seed and both teams suffered potentially significant injuries.



Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott (4) raises his arm as he heads off the field after an NFL football game against the Washington Commanders, Sunday, Jan. 7, 2024, in Landover, Md.
Associated Press

Patrick Mahomes sat while backup Blaine Gabbert guided the defending Super Bowl champion Chiefs to victory with the AFC's No. 3 seed already locked up. Matthew Stafford watched Carson Wentz lead the Rams to a comeback win over the 49ers to clinch the NFC's sixth seed. Joe Flacco and other starters didn't play for the Browns

in a meaningless loss as Cleveland prepared for just its second playoff appearance in 21 seasons. Six teams are in the playoffs: Browns, Lions, Packers, Texans, Rams, Steelers after missing out last season. At least four teams who failed to qualify one season have reached the playoffs the next every year since 1990. A few reunions highlight the

opening round. Stafford, who was 0-3 in the playoffs with the Lions, goes back to Detroit with the Rams (10-7). The Lions (12-5) tied a franchise record for wins in a regular season and will seek their first playoff victory since beating Dallas on Jan. 5, 1992. They will play on Sunday night. Detroit lost rookie tight end Sam LaPorta to a knee in-

jury in a 30-20 win over Minnesota. Lions coach Dan Campbell said "it's not good news " but not as bad as it seemed when LaPorta was carted to the locker room.

Cowboys coach Mike McCarthy will face his former team when Jordan Love leads the Packers (9-8) to Dallas on Sunday afternoon. The Cowboys (12-5) routed Washington 38-10 to clinch the NFC East title and will host Green Bay aiming to stay unbeaten at home this season.

"They've had a good year," McCarthy said of the Packers. "I haven't watched them a whole lot. The drama of it, I'm sure you all will love. I will not participate this year. It's playoff time. It doesn't matter who we play, to be honest with you."

Miami's loss dropped the Dolphins (11-6) to the sixth seed. Instead of hosting Buffalo again next week, they have to visit Kansas City (11-6) on Saturday night. Dolphins superstar wide receiver Tyreek Hill plays against the team he helped win a Super Bowl four years ago. □

Giants' Daboll fires special teams coordinator McGaughey, O-line coach Johnson after 6-11 season

By **TOM CANAVAN**
AP Sports Writer

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — The New York Giants fired special teams coordinator Thomas McGaughey and offensive line coach Bobby Johnson on Monday, a day after the team finished a disappointing 6-11 season.

Coach Brian Daboll announced the decisions at the start of a postseason news conference. The second-year coach said offensive coordinator Mike Kafka and defensive coordinator Wink Martindale will be back next season.

Running back coach Jeff Nixon is leaving to become the offensive coordinator at Syracuse. Daboll said Nixon wants to become a college head coach.

The moves are not surprising. The Giants, who were looking to build off a rare trip to the playoffs last season, got off to a shaky start in a season of high expectations when Dallas blocked a 45-yard field goal attempt by Graham Gano and Noah Igbinoghene returned it 58 yards for a touchdown. Dallas won the game 40-0.

McGaughey was in his sixth year as the coordinator, serving under Pat Shurmur, Joe Judge and the last two under Daboll. He had an earlier stint with the Giants as assistant special teams coach under Tom Coughlin, winning two Super Bowls. He had a year left on his contract.

New York allowed a league-high 85 sacks 20 more than any other team and Johnson paid the price despite a slew of injuries that forced constant lineup changes for the first eight games. Star left tackle Andrew Thomas (hamstring) was injured in the opener and missed seven games. □



New York Giants head coach Brian Daboll watches during the first half of an NFL football game against the Philadelphia Eagles Monday, Dec. 25, 2023, in Philadelphia.

Associated Press